FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Volume XIX, Number 1, February 1968

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Our purpose: To promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God, regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

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EDITORIAL

January. February. A new year. A time of reckonings and resolutions, of facts faced and hopes hoped and even rehoped once more. A good time in spite of the weather which, this year, has brought the coldest winter: trees of ice, meadows of snow, and, inside the house, a blazing fire, warmth, comfort, the privacy of the soul by itself. . . .

For some, Christmas is the day of reckoning. It brings up the memories, especially memories of youth, which count up in irrefutable nostalgias the number of years lived. Although the day's meaning is essentially one of joy, it is perhaps, for these people, anyhow, the saddest day in every three-hundred-and-sixty-five.

New Year's Day, with zero days and nights following, is really necessary. Possibly because it has fewer emotions involved in it, fewer memories. (Where was I last New Year's? And the last? And ten before that? And twenty before that? At the Mummers' Parade in Philadelphia. At the Rose Bowl in California. One, two, maybe three New Year's stay in the mind.) On New Year's Day it is easier to make assessments of both the past and the future.

And in the chill hours that, for the long length of two months, succeed New Year's, a human being lives at the essential level, the necessities of existence seeming more necessary than at any other season: shelter, food, clothing, heat. There are parties, of course, and theaters. But it is the time, too, when people are most alone.

Most people find it hard, these days, to be alone. The pressure of the week-day are too stimulating. It seems impossible to

let down, to relax. Anxieties creep into one's room along with the draughts and the splatters of snow. Better turn on the TV, get on the telephone, ask somebody—anybody—over to keep oneself from thinking.

And yet there is a purpose to this season of hibernation for human beings just as there is for bears and for the seeds underneath the snow and ice.

Privacy with oneself is as important as food and shelter to the sustenance of a human being. Only within oneself can be found the strengths which permit one to grow, to (next season) improve, to come to flower as one's own unique being, no other like it on earth, as different from all others of the species as all fingerprints, as all snowflakes.

But why, some ask, this insistence upon being unique? It separates one from everyone else. It makes you feel lonelier than you really are. It makes you worry. It gives you the jitters. Why not stay in touch with others? Make a long-distance phone-call Doesn't the Bible—doesn't every one of the holy books in the world—ask you to love others? It is a lot more fun.

But is it really more fun? Don't all people, no matter how much you love them, tire you at times? Don't they all need, no matter how much you want to give it, a kind of handling which takes a lot out of you?

True, love is the message of all beliefs, Jewish and Christian, Moslem and Hindu. But what is love? Isn't love, really, the strength of one person given to another—in admiration, kindness, care? And how can you love unless you are strong? It is necessary to be alone to be strong enough to love another person, to take the time and the energy and the mental perception to express

that love.

And so the seasons are arranged for our benefit. We are given January, February, and March to do our reckoning with ourselves, to make our resolutions, and to find the strength within ourselves to carry them out. Be alone. Find your self. Enjoy your self.

And then, when April comes, you will be strong. You will flower along with the trees and the gardens. It is no accident that the season which follows is known, everywhere, as the season of love.

AT ELEVATOR #3

Emily Sargent Councilman

Frightening
for one small girl,
that moving-inside-box
walled in with monster doors,
swiftly snapping doors,
unless, unless you're
quick inside.

She didn't know
me, but whimpering,
she ran to put her hand,
a fluttering bird, in mine....
How suddenly the two
of us had wings
for mounting up!

SOUTH AND WEST (copyright 1966 and used by permission)

"SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY"

Carla Patsuris

Into the vast ahead men dream, men sing,
The present becoming a distant thing

Until the known and unknown verge allied
The intermingled past and future justified;
Each metaphor of the Ankh and Tau a guide:

With one man and then another and another
Eventually walking as brother with brother

After having existed only
In wide-removed different states; and lonely.

Oh always the world must be growing
And rivers endlessly flowing
With generations progressively knowing

Time is the friend to eulogize
For after sun's setting: Sunrise.

Yet, what is it people say?
"The hills are always fairest far away?"

TRIBUTE TO BUDDY ARNOLD

Permit me to acknowledge the most wonderful and spiritual graciousness for daily living that I have discovered in FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER magazine. Mr. Buddy Arnold of Iowa, U.S.A. wrote his philosophy in FIP'S August 1964 issue, wherein he says: "All that I am belongs to God." This God-inspired gentle man sits in a wheelchair. Spastic handicapped he tells us: "God doesn't give any person anything he cannot bear." What a loving spirit; an example for us who enjoy everything we take for granted every day. We have eyesight to enjoy our Friend's face; children dancing; God's blue heaven with fairy-tale clouds; sunsets and sunrises; rainbows to cherish; hearing, to listen to birdsongs; the glad rushing of merry rivers; and the voice of God's melodious waterfalls. Wind is heard singing in the trees; the agility to walk through a deep forest; sense of smell for inhaling pungent pine-tree needles bedding Good Earth, and flowering high fragrance of our prayers. Blessed are our prayerful hands to create gifts; and to be able to earn one's living! Forever these glories we take for granted. How can we be matter-of-fact when we have such a prolific list of thank-you's to show the generous Lord, gentling our voice to sing hosannas for All Good HE presents us? Unthinking, we mortals appropriate much for our blessings daily: we should

thankfully count them, never become selfishly-centered. Daily should we delight some neighbor to comfort, share smiles to brighten his day that might have seemed gloomy without loving attention. To this magnificent man who tells us that he has "never walked, or spoken a word that I didn't have to force out," I offer my humble thank you from my heart, to Buddy Arnold for having stimulated people on God's earth wherever his message shall travel. Anew he brings a resurgence for strengthening people's Life Spirit, by having given his tremendous God-prayered own loving thoughts for building the Day, glorified! "Bless Mr. Arnold forevermore," is the wish of everybody around the world when they shall read his understanding cheer he magnanimously reveals in his sterling High prayerful words. His fine spiritual thoughts inspire us to listen for the Creator's wishes in our miracle of erecting Hearts of mankind everywhere in blessed moments, planning to aid others and spread gratitude. Continually should we encourage fellowship in prayered deeds as a mercy-bearing service, now assisting our brothers the world over, through a closer relation to God, our loving Father.

— Alice Richmond

Beethoven wrote, "In the state of life to which I have been called I will distribute among my fellow men those benefits I have received from God."

And Benjamin Franklin wrote, "Aceept my kind offices to Thy other children as the only return in my power for Thy continual favors to me."

WITH WISDOM GIVE US UNDERSTANDING

Catherine Cabeen Houck

In an adult world the unformed vagaries of a child's thinking may be called fancies, conceits or inventions of an overactive mind while in his own world it is a tragic reality, a plain fact of matter in which he does not wish to put his belief but from which he can not escape.

We have recently averted such a tragedy in our own family and while grateful for its outcome we still are aware of what might have occurred. Our three-year old granddaughter, Alice, suddenly developed distress at bed-time. It was a genuine fear not of the darkness but of some intangible thing that she did not have a name for. Without prying too deeply into the child's thoughts her parents tried to discover if some playmate had told a frightening tale or if some story read to her might have had an unexpected effect but this did not seem to be the trouble. Could it be that fall days with continued daylight-saving was bringing night nearer to her bed-time? This, too, failed to be the explanation.

It was not the darkness but something about the disappearance of the sun. After many trying nights, when this communication was made, our son cut a large, gay sun from bright orange

paper and fastened it between the Venetian blind and the glass. The light shining through amused Alice and for one night she seemed content. By the second night the game had lost some of its delight and by the third there was no response at all.

The original concern seemed to be growing and our son and his wife had come to the conclusion that they needed professional help when on the following afternoon Alice approached her mother who was busy preparing food for dinner. Her problem had become too much to be borne and with a very visible effort she tried to put her concern into words. Now she asked, "Is it getting night now?"

Her mother replied, "No, but I have some things that take a long time to cook so I must get them ready now."

Then the child put her arms around her mother's waist and burying her head against her in a tragic whisper asked, "When night comes does Daddy have enough money to buy us an other tomorrow?"

Here was the anxiety, as deep-seated as humanity, as ancient as mankind! How grateful we are that our daughter-in-law was wise enough to conceal her own relief and to ask no questions but to confidently reply, "Daddy doesn't buy our tomorrows, darling, God gives them to us free."

But our little granddaughter, happy to be consoled still needed assurance, "But will God *always* give them?" And her mother replied, "All I know, dear, is that He has given me every tomorrow of my life."

I do not know how the parents expressed their gratefulness for this beautiful solving of a great perplexity but mine was shown

by sending to the child a comforting poem written just for her. I called it

Lullaby For Alice

Gently rest, my little darling,
Sweetly close your heavy eyes,
Sleep will swiftly fall upon you,
Day will come with crimson skies.

Then again the sun will greet you,
Other joys will come your way,
Love a nd laughter fill each moment
Of the new God-given day.

HIBERNAL PREP.

Marie Transue

By mountain meadow
Ponds cattails release silky
Heart-cores, and once bold
Flowers burst to spread their seed:
Autumn is waiting for snow-fall.

CLOUD SHAPES

Pollyanna Sedziol

Flamingoes dwell only in sunny climes
And swans live in Central Park
But they come to visit me many times
As the day drifts into dark.

Angel wings are never seen,
Or so the wise ones say,
But I've watched them soaring, lovely and clean,
At the close of a summer day.

Cloud shapes in the after-glow
Are beautiful to see
And watching them drift to and fro
Brings a cloak of peace to me.

Come sit with me upon the step
As evening slips quietly by,
From busyness for a moment escape
To watch the pink flamingoes fly.

LOVE

T. L. Vaswani

The teaching of all the saints of humanity is summed up in the one word,—Love. The message of all the mystics is enshrined in the one word,—Love. The wisdom of the sages, the wisdom of the ages is in the one word,—Love. The witness of Sri Rama and Jesus, Sri Chaitanya and Guru Gobind Singh,—of whom Beloved Dada (Sri T. L. Vaswani) writes in these pages,—is in the one word,—Love.

"God is Love! And he who abides in Love abides in God and God abides in him!" said a Sufi mystic. Love is the One Reality: all else is but words. Love is Truth, and Truth is Love. I set out in quest of Truth,—said Simone Weil,—and fell into the arms of Love.

"What is Love?" was the question asked of the great Sufi saint, Bayazid. And he answered:—"This is love,—that ye account yourselves very little and God very great."

This was the secret of the lives of Sri Rama and Jesus, Sri Chaitanya and Guru Gobind Singh. They accounted themselves "very little and God very great."

He who loves God is freed from pride. He loves every one, even his "enemies." And, as Sri Chaitanya repeatedly taught, he becomes like the tree which gives fruit to those that pelt stones at it. He rewards the smiter. And, like Jesus, he blesses and prays for those who crucify him:— "Father! forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Love ever-increasingly! For love is limitless. And he who would walk the way must pour out the love of his heart on all, must spread the sunshine of love wherever he goes. Even as the sun shines on the good and the evil alike, even as the river gives forth its water to all, even so must the seeker on the Path share, unstintingly, the love of his heart with all. To give love is to be god-like: to withhold love is to descend into darkness.

"Alone, O Love ineffable!
Thy saving name is given;
To turn aside from Thee is hell,
To walk with Thee is heaven!"

"Grow in love,—and in humility,—from more to more!" was the blessing Beloved Dada gave us, again and again. Grow in love from more to more: therefore give more and more love to others. For the more of love you give, the more you will have. Such is the law!

When a mother came and complained to Beloved Dada that her daughter had gone astray, he said to her:—"Give your daughter the love of your heart,—and she will come back!"

And when the mother protested that the daughter had been "spoilt" only because she had been given too much of love, Beloved Dada quietly said:—"Love her the more!"

If anyone has departed from the path of righteousness, his only hope is in someone loving him,—limitlessly.

Such love flowed out of the heart of Sri Rama. It transformed Kubja and many others who came under his influence.

Such love flowed out of the heart of Jesus. It converted Mary Magdalene, and the sinner became a saint.

Such love flowed out of the heart of Sri Chaitanya. It converted robbers and courtesans and wicked men. It made them new. It even laid a spell on wild, ferocious beasts.

Such love flowed out of the heart of Guru Gobind Singh. It touched his disciples and they exclaimed:—"Lord, we are thine! We lay down our lives as an offering at thy lotus-feet!" And Guru Gobind Singh built up the Khalsa Brotherhood. The Khalsas became the saviours and liberators of India, in a dark period of the nation's history. Every member of the Khalsa Brotherhood sang in his heart the song of the Iraqi poet:

I am love-intoxicated.
And from love to Thee
I lay down my life for Thee!

There is no power greater than love. And love is not love if it does not flow out to friends and foes alike. "Love, love, love even thine enemy," says beloved Dada; "and though he hate thee as a thorn, thou wilt blossom as a rose!"

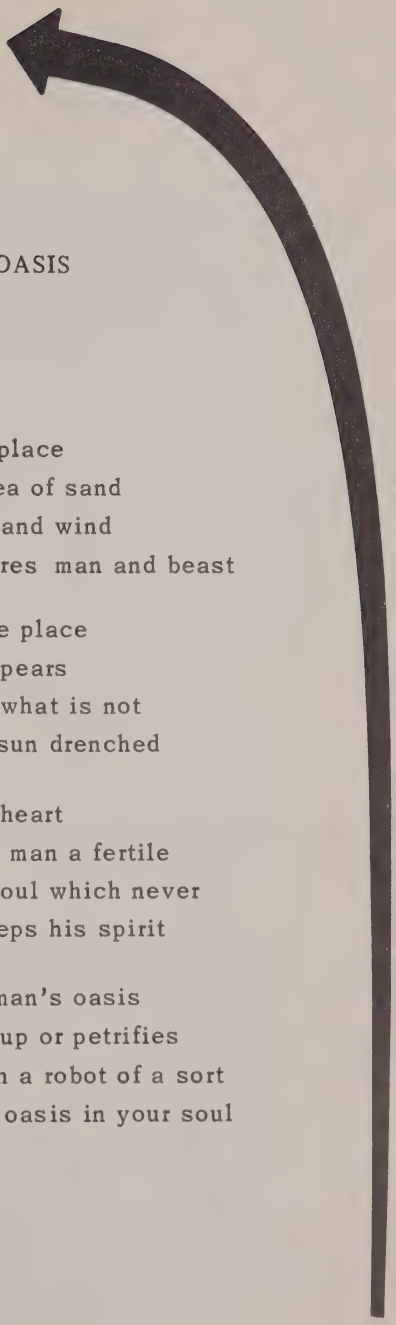
If you would make rapid progress on the Path, Beloved Dada urged, you must bless those that curse you, serve those that hurt you, for you and your brother are one!

In the mind of Beloved Dada there was no separation. We entered a bus one day. There was only one vacant seat. He made room for me and asked me to sit by his side. And I said to him:—"Dada! if I sit, there will be very little room left for you." And

beloved Dada said: "We will love each other more and there will be plenty of room." In Beloved Dada's mind there was no feeling of separation,—between his own body and the body of another. Both were tabernacles of the One Spirit.

This is what gave him a sense of identification with the sufferings of the poor and broken ones. He did not merely have "compassion" on the poor. He actually felt that their sorrows were sorrows. And, not unoften, he wept, seeing another in grief. There is no death, he taught us early one morning. "Death is an illusion. We must learn to transcend it." And in the course of the day he was called to the side of an old mother who had lost an only son in an air-crash. She wept bitter tears. And Beloved Dada's eyes were touched with tears. When, later, we said to him: "Only this morning you taught us that death was an illusion. What, then, was the reason of your tears?" he answered:—"When I sat by the side of the old mother, I felt I was the old mother!" Was this, too, the reason why Jesus wept when he sat by the side of the sister of Lazarus?

To Beloved Dada, helping others was not a duty: it was not even a virtue: it was a pulse of existence. For him to live was to love,—and serve the poor and broken ones. And they came to him as to their father and friend, their guardian and God. "We have seen no other God!" they exclaimed. And to him the poor were pictures of God. He gave and gave and was never tired of giving. He gave till the last day of his earthly life. He gave and kept no account of what he gave. He gave and forgot all about it. He gave and forgot all about it. He gave in love to the lowly: he gave in reverence to the poor and needy. Not once did he fail in answering the call of human suffering.



KEEP A GREEN OASIS

Marion H. Freeman

oasis is a fertile place
an island in the sea of sand
and sky and stars and wind
a spot which nurtures man and beast

sometimes a fertile place
dries up and disappears
and travelers see what is not
an image on their sun drenched

mind and eye and heart
so it must be with man a fertile
place within his soul which never
disappears but keeps his spirit

nurtured for if a man's oasis
of the soul dries up or petrifies
he is a hollow man a robot of a sort
pray keep a green oasis in your soul

THE DIVINE SECRET

from the recently published book A GOD FOR MODERN

Arise! Awake! Approach the great and learn.
Like the sharp edge of a razor is that path,
so the wise say—hard to tread and difficult
to cross.

Katha Upanishad

But all shall be well, and all shall be well,
and all manner of things shall be well.

Dame Julian of Norwich

All that I have seen teaches me to trust the
Creator for all I have not seen.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

I believe in the sun, even when it is not shining;
I believe in love, even when I feel it not;
I believe in God, even when He is silent.

Warsaw Ghetto Victim

MAN *by Roland Gammon*

Christ is a timeless process going on forever in your heart. Christ, the redeeming Love and illuminating Presence, is the Self of yourself and that by which the whole world is pervaded. In St. Paul's load-lifting phrase: "Christ is all and all in all."

This is the secret: life is divine, nature is divine, you are divine. The true Light that lighteth every man who comes into the world is really the incarnating Christ now and forever; therefore, Christ as the God principle or Love principle in the world lives within you as your infinite immortal self. This is your spiritual birthright, your inner kingdom, your invisible center where truth, light and beauty abide in fullness. In the words of Robert Frost:

> "We dance around in a ring and suppose,
> While the Secret sits in the center and knows."

Or as Jesus himself said: "the Kingdom of Heaven is within you."

It is here in the hid universe within—called variously by the world's Godmen the Inner Light, Indwelling Word, Divine Suchness, Buddha-womb, Cosmic Consciousness, Nameless Tao—that truth itself may be known directly. It is here that shines the "Imprisoned splendor" waiting for each human being to recover and release it. Thus, as India's scholarly philosopher-president S. Radhakrishnan has emphasized, all artistic, religious and scientific achievements are the work of this living Spirit in man. Thus, the cosmic mystery pervading the galactic void also forms the inmost being of man. "Earth is His footing," says the *Upanishads* whenever it images the Self that manifests in the universe.

Only the pure in heart, the selfless in service,, the devout in worship can come in this unitive knowledge of God. And yet each person who seeks the higher way can practice the moral disciplines and the spiritual exercises which enable the soul to rise in contemplation and to know that the Atman, or immanent eternal Self, is one with Braham or the absolute Principle of existence. So it is that the free human individual, who has a social side to him so long as he remains a human being, also has a certain innocence at the heart of his body which defies all analysis. It is this central core in us which makes us capable of individual freedom and responsibility; it is this secret essence which contains our ultimate power to redeem ourselves. Even as we are not completely the victims of necessity, so Kant's doctrine of transcendental freedom affirms a wholly-free, noumenal self located in a realm transcending the casually-connected phenomena projected by the knowing mind. If we realize that we are not simply objects but subjects also, every day gives us a new chance, heralds a new life, establishes a new order of society.

God is not only transcendent to the world but is immanent in it. One of Kabir's songs represents God as saying:

> O servant, where dost thou seek me?
> I am beside thee.
> I am neither in temple nor in mosque.
> I am neither in rites and ceremonies.
> If thou art a true seeker,
> Thou shalt at once see me.

In the end, Kabir concludes: "God is the breath of all breath." In that light, St. Catherine of Genoa realizes the same truth: "My me is God, nor do I recognize any other me except my God Himself."

If the basic theological problem today, as the University of

Chicago's Langdon Gilkey has written, "is the reality of God," then the place to discover Him is the inner kingdom or "golden flower" of the self, in the mystery and magnificent orderliness of nature, in the personal witness and nameless acts of creative love which help to eradicate the evil and inequality of the world and, above all, in the ceaseless daily emulation of such world saviors as Krishna, Buddha and Jesus of Nazareth whose model lives teach earthly man how to rise from ignorance to highest knowledge, from a primitive to a blissful state of existence and from the envious, vengeful night consciousness of the jungle to the radiant, altruistic Christ consciousness of the Kingdom come to earth. If the purpose and achievement of the radical "God is dead" theologians (i.e. Temple University's Paul Van Buren, Colgate Rochester Divinity School's William Hamilton and Emory University's Thomas J. J. Altizer) has been to demolish the white-bearded, quick-to-anger anthropomorphic God of our ancestors supposedly perched on cosmic Cloud Nine and indifferent to man's fate except when placated by burnt offerings and human sacrifice, then the stage is eminently set for the existential experience of the God who not only shines in the universe's star-clad Void but also knocks at the door of every lonely heart, who suranimates the humanity of his prodigal Creation and its natural, moral and metaphysical laws and who can be known, joyfully, intimately, divinely known, by all who seek him in prayer, love, work and compassionate service.

Affairs are now soul-size in man's evolution, as British playwright Christopher Fry has said; the event is exploration into God. To all sincere seekers, students and worshippers, even to the modern world's plethora of skeptics, iconoclasts, communists, beatniks and bewildered non-heroes, that exploration ever beacons within the Eternal Now. Whatever an individual's temperament, training, special skills and knowledge, the immanent and transcendent Lord awaits as the God of Science, the God of History, the God of Art, and all those Gods are one. All human beings are

Christs in the making. Thus, it is the purpose of all things that each living being shall become a perfect image of God—the Infinite Father-Mother of all, the One without a second, the total Life, Love, Light, Bliss, Energy, Consciousness of the cosmos.

An ancient legend relates how God sought the safest place to hide the pearl of his divinity, away from Man's restless curiosity. Rejecting in turn the highest mountains, the bowels of the earth, the dark recesses of the sea, He put it where Man would be least likely to look—in Man's own heart.

And Man has sought afar for that which is the nearest of the near. His churches have steadily emphasized the sinfulness of man and the "otherness" of God. Often, not finding Him "off there," men conclude He is not, and that Man is but an alien and orphan in the universe. *For he who finds not God within, seldom finds Him abroad.*

Few things are more important in the religious life than the development of a certain inwardness, a mystical awareness, a sense of the Eternal in time. Religious liberals especially often say that conduct is basic to religion. But even more fundamental is integrity and purity of motive and the experience of the Divine from which good conduct springs. This then is the spirituality which undergirts all morality and which we must develop it if our Permanent Golden Age is to show the radiance and vitality of real religion.

The prescription is not difficult to give. To follow it is. Be a pilgrim, not to some distant land, but in search of your own soul. Resisting the roar and rattle of history's noisiest time, hush and bless yourself with silence. Discriminating between the Real and the unreal, believing that all things are possible with God, behold with the Chinese sage Mamonkwon: "It is all so clear that

sometimes it takes a long time to see; the light you are seeking already burns in your own lantern."

Years ago, as a boy in Maine, I stood in the May moonlight beside a glistering lake. Suddenly, in the forest quiet as I watched the moonsilvered waves and heard the winds stir the tall pines, the solitary scene dissolved in an ocean of light. Behind, beneath and above--indeed, bursting from trees, thicket, flowers, stones, waves and star-clad sky—glowed a light which enveloped and dissolved me in its beauty. A heart-piercing joy lifted me up; a tremendous new felicity thrilled my being even as it confirmed my youthful yearning for what the saints call "union with God."

In that silent opening I knew the universe was a living, luminous emanation of God himself; that His continuous, creative Presence sustained every field, flower, flake, scatter of stars and miracle of life; that, if and when that Presence should ever be withdrawn, the world would vanish; that, as the prophets and poets had foretold, every human being was the individual embodiment of divine Being and that the whole purpose of life was to realize that divinity here and now.

Here was the first of such experiences in which I marveled that immortal Beauty had made the world and we were part of that Beauty. It was the first of such experiences from Caribou, Maine to Lake Windemeer, England to Darjeeling, India in which I saw the World-wonder rise and fall, and forever after loved the entire Creation and everyone and everything in it. It was the first of such experiences in which I "rubbed my face against the stars," felt the confirming Christ surge within my heart and understood with Angelius Silesius, "God within, God without, beyond compare—a Being wholly here and wholly there."

Does God offer any of us any experience more elevated and

ultimate than this? Does he offer any of us today a truer way to make religion meaningful again and to fulfill ourselves in that which is eternal? I judge not, for such experiences are not only the ground and goal of our lives, but the motive power of the revolution in religion and science now going on. Such experiences form the essence and example of millions of lives now revealing that the Permanent Golden Age rises radiantly among us.

Life is a field of honor, and we are not slaves but knights, if we be but masters of ourselves.

Wilfred Tomason Grenfell

The silent, serene beauty of a holy life is the most powerful influence, except the power of God.

Blaise Pascal

The greatest homage that can be paid to truth is to use it.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

A religion that is small enough for our understanding is not large enough for our needs.

Arthur Balfour

Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom.

Charles H. Spurgeon

Faith is the holding of reasonable convictions in realms beyond the reach of final demonstration.

Harry Emerson Fosdick

OH TRUST THE STARS, THE IVY AND THE CLOVER AND GIVE TIME A CHANCE TO WORK ITS MIRACLES

Little hoodlums hurled stones today
Scattering agates, plopping stains
Of crash against Cathedral window-panes
Then, laughing, raced away away

Yet, never shall spoiler topple joy:
Orchards gardens woods and russet vines
Of wild berries bursting purple wines
Quicken and man evolves from hooligan boy:

Edens are forever forever one
(Paradise was never wholly lost)
Though wisdom tree fruit and buildings cost
The price of many a changing sun.

Vandals hurled pebbles out and over
To fight progress (a troubled race
With growing-pains across each face)
But look! Here nods an ivy beams a clover

And tonight the stars can wink at broken glass
As though they know that only *Peace is*
While growth and beauty never ceases;
And know that hate and wars and hoodlums pass.

— Carla Patsuris

IN MEDIA MUNDI

Howard G. Hanson

Goodly, rare His birth in us
oh world, oh Virgin Queen,
oh Pasiphaë past our lust,
oh ocean of all dream!

When universes rose to Mind
and seemed His fleshly robe,
the flaming center left their bound
and molded in a babe.

That form resolved, froze into shape
(from before light, unmade)
all things, all thought—no hope
to grasp that allness' seed!

But heart knows, and lights the mind
where mystery now kneels us,
and Pasiphaë, Virgo, sin
and good float, motes of dust.

Credit line by arrangement with John F. Blair, Publisher (of Winston-Salem) of Howard Gordon Hanson, FUTURE COIN OR CLIMBER, June 1967.

GOD'S POINT OF VIEW

Berneice A. McCombs

Looking down on the world from a small private plane, the earth stretches as far as the eye can see. The vastness of the land and sky seem to take one's breathe away. How small man appears to be in this wide expanse of land. The farms seem so small compared to God's handiwork.

Come with me to the world of imagination and let us see God's point of view in His wide universe....

Yes, God created all. He made the animal and plant kingdoms to His liking. Yet, there was something lacking in His world. God wanted something special to love. He made man and fashioned him after His own image. God shared His mind with man and gave to man a freedom of choice. A mechanical man would never do. You see, God wanted love from man in return for His goodness which is found on the earth.

"Believe in Me!" God kept asking.

Now, what could be more simple? God developed love and gave it to all the earth. Man has only to believe in Him to find the happiness and goodness that exists.

Viewing the landscape from a high altitude, God placed the forests, rock formations, rivers, and sandbanks in artistic arrangements. He gave the earth it's beauty.

Again God asked, "Come talk with me. Have no other God before me and I will give you eternal life."

Prayer means a great deal to God. God gave man life but wants the human soul to trust Him above everything else. Pray in a silent place away from noise and cares of the world. God likes to talk with us alone and in a quiet place. He desires our fellowship. There seems to be so many of us, but God takes time for each individual soul. He gives so much even when we give back so little.

At 8,000 feet, the air has the smoothness of glass. We seem to be the only ones in this blue sky and very close to the heavens. I imagine it wouldn't take much to touch this wonder world of heaven.

God says, "Love thy neighbor! I created him too."

In man's world, when we create something we are pleased with our accomplishments. God has the same feeling because He made all. There is goodness in each of us because God has made it so. We have only to look for it in each other.

Looking at the vastness of earth and sky, the beauty that God has created, and the importance of each soul makes one wonder why God has picked man to love the most in all His universe. God knows the number of hairs on each head and each star He calls by name. He cares for each living thing and keeps a personal inventory of all.

Belief in God, prayer, and love for one another are the simple requirements of the heart of God. These requests can be the beauty of the earth, if we just look for them.

THE WINNOWING

Catherine Cabeen Houck

To the threshing floor I took my wheat
for winnowing.
The sheaves were large,
the harvest promising.
As I watched the chaff blowing away
in a golden rain
I felt a sense of disaster—
could I not keep some of this,
must all be cast aside?
A small earth-colored mound lay at my feet.
This? Is this all I have to show
for a season's toil?
I knelt on the floor
and buried my hands in the mound,
through my fingers ran the grain,
warm, smelling of fields and sun,
filled with life-giving sustenance,
food for today,
vibrant seeds for tomorrow's planting.

"Nature has planned a golden age, of old age wherein we shall be fair to look upon, upright, content, clear eyed and strong. Have you studied the cactus? Do you know what Burbank did to it? The cactus grew on a smiling, verdant plain. She was sweet to the taste, velvety of skin and good to see. She gave herself gladly and rejoiced in her power to please. Then came evil days when the waters of the plain dried up, and the sun blazed hotter and hotter until the earth lay like a parched and barren desert. Hungry and thirsty animals ravaged the strickened land. The cactus, fainting with heat and shrinking with fear of all living things, dug deeper and deeper into the earth, drawing up from underground the water hoarded there. She spewed upon it and turned it into the bitterest of bitter brews; then she covered herself with daggerlike spines and warlike eyes, until she was vile to the taste and hideous to gaze upon. She was safe from roving beasts and the burning sun, but at the price of a velvet skin and a succulent heart. It took thousands of years for her to change from a tender plant to a battle-scarred warrior.

But listen. One day a soft-voiced man, who loved all living things, looked deeply into the heart of the cactus and saw the tragedy of her life written there. He looked behind the scaly and unsightly exterior to the soul of the plan plant and found there, undiminished and undimmed, the old burning desire to give and to please. So he took the cactus and placed it in his garden among the perfumed roses and the crimson poppies, and he said to her: "you were once fair and pleasing to the eye, but fear, suspicion, and desparation have changed you until you became ugly and repellant. Now all the old days are passed. I am going to protect and nourish you. You are lovely within. Throw off your mask of poison spines

give up the bitter waters and be yourself again. I will see that no evil thing befalls you." The cactus listened and took heed. Fearing no longer the sun and the wild things, full of faith and confidence, she cast off one by one the dagger points; she gave up the bitter brew and became sweet, velvety, and fair again.

The emotions of fear, worry, suspicions, anxiety, envy, anger and all her brood of hateful passions are the chief factors in the transformation of human beings from loveliness to unloveliness. Wrinkles and spines and bitterness are nature's answer to these sentiments. The mask will be thrown off in an atmosphere of love, confidence and desire to give. No one can grow gracefully from maturity to ripe age unless these evil emotions are subdued. They are poison producers, back bowers, artery stiffeners, wrinkle makers, eye dimmers, hair whiteners. The state of mind resulting from the elimination of these emotional states is best expressed by the word "optimism".

"Personal Ascendancy"
— *M. Wardell*
(By courtesy of F. A. Mastropaolo)

THE BLESSING OF WORK

Eric Butterworth

I have heard it said that religion is fine for those who live in cloistered places, away from the mainstream of life, but that it is completely impractical in the market-place. The people who make such statements have heard of the preacher of Galilee, but I wonder if they have ever heard of the carpenter of Nazareth.

Before Jesus performed a single mighty work in demonstrating the law, He served an apprenticeship in His father's carpenter shop. There He proved Himself to be capable of handling the responsibilities of supporting a family. Does this seem surprising to you?

Tradition says that Joseph died when Jesus was little more than a boy. It is believed by many that there were four brothers, and that we have their names; and although sisters are not named, the word is used in the plural, so there must have been at least two. Thus, after His father died, Jesus may have been the breadwinner for eight people.

The question is often asked, What was Jesus doing in the silent years between age twelve and age thirty?

And the answer might very simply be that He was busy taking care of His family until His brothers and sisters were able to go out on their own—when He was thirty.

Jesus' great understanding of life and His tremendous insight into the dynamics of prayer become the more meaningful when we speculate that He spent many long hours of study and contemplation in the quiet hills overlooking the Sea of Galilee—and that this was done after working hours when the shop was closed.

Can't you imagine that there were times when Jesus had the same experience everyone has who keeps a shop? He may have risen early in order to get through His day's work so that He might spend a long evening on the hills in communion and study. And then just as He is closing the shop for the night, a customer draws up his oxen at the door and asks the young carpenter to attend to the yoke.

You can imagine Jesus listening patiently to the Man's urgent plea for help, and then taking the yoke into the shop to work

on it with as much patience, skill, and efficiency as though the job had been the first to come in early that morning. You can almost be sure that Jesus would have been concerned if He thought that the oxen were bearing a rough yoke any longer than necessary, or that because of His imperfect workmanship an animal might suffer or a farmer might be inconvenienced.

Years later Jesus looked into the faces of those who were weary and heavy-laden and said: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me...my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light."

Recently as I passed two men on the street, I heard only one statement of their conversation. But it was enough to catch the tone of the discussion. The one man was gesturing with both arms outstretched, saying, "just tell me one thing—what's in it for me? "

In the emotion of labor-management disputes, when there is all too much generalization about the evils of big business and big unionism, we would all do well to take inventory of our own demands on life. Do our personal attitudes more nearly approximate Jesus' ideal of "second mile" service or that of the man who says, "What's in it for me?"

I have a picture in my study that has had a profound influence on my life during the last fifteen years. It is a classic work by the German artist Rosenthal and it is titled "The Blessing of Work." It depicts a young boy carving a huge, almost life-size figure of Mary. He is tenderly working on the intricate details of the feet, while, unknown to him, his creation looks down on him with a look of compassion and with outstretched arms, blessing him as he works.

I have spent long hours meditating on this meaningful picture. Its lesson could transform the lives of many who are trapped in the rat race of eking out a living. I have often felt that this gracious figure of Mary might bring renown and wealth to its creator, or it might wind up in a dusty barn. However, nothing will ever add to or detract from the compensation which that young boy is receiving while he is working.

"What's in it for me?" There is a great blessing in it—whatever the work, however menial. And you will most certainly be

underpaid, though your income be in five figures, if all you get out of it is a paycheck.

As a counselor, I often hear the statement, "My life has no meaning."

I startle people by replying, "That makes about as much sense as standing in a room with a flashlight in your hand and saying 'This room has no light.'"

The meaning of life is not something that we find in experiences. It is something that we bring into expression. It is something that we are. Each of us is a meaningful expression of the Infinite. And God has something to express through us that He cannot manifest in any other way. Thus, the tasks at hand, whatever they are, are simply opportunities to release the meaningfulness of life, by releasing our own "imprisoned splendor."

It is easy to lose our way in the changing, challenging experiences of every day. We need to remind ourselves continually of our uniqueness, to affirm: *I am about my Father's business. He needs me to do this work, for no one can do it in just the same way that I can.* Thus we come to realize that "I am in my right place. This is the best possible place in which to give what only I can give, and to do the growing that I need to do."

This foundation is the strengthening insight that can enable you to meet, overcome, and find meaning in all of life's exigencies. Without this insight we meet every difficult experience like the mountain climber who enters a dense fog, and lacking a goal before his eyes, is in danger of succumbing to total weariness. If the fog lifts and he catches sight of the shelter hut in the distance, he at once feels a surge of renewed strength. And you can experience this flow of strength, this burst of new enthusiasm, when you remember your uniqueness.

Work, whatever may be your present lot, is the place in which your uniqueness stands in relation to society and thus acquires meaning and value. But this meaning and value is attached to your work as a contribution to society, not to the actual occupation as such. Thus you cannot say that this or that job offers you the opportunity for fulfilment or for interesting living. No one occupation of itself is filled with exciting meaning and purpose.

Many people insist that they could have been happy and fulfilled if only they had gone into different work. But that is to misunderstand what work is. Work, of itself, does not make anyone indispensable and irreplaceable; it only gives him a chance to be so.

One woman, whose recovery from a serious illness was painfully slow, said that she thought her life was without meaning and that she had no desire to get well. She said she knew that everything would be different if she had a job that fulfilled her.

She said, "If only I had been a nurse or a scientist or a researcher, how exciting life would be!"

Consider the nurse doing her daily routine of sterilizing syringes, carrying bed-pans, changing bedding, coping with neurotic patients—all necessary duties, but scarcely enough in themselves to satisfy the human spirit.

However, when a nurse does some little thing beyond her regimented duties, when she is kind to a patient or comforts someone critically ill—then she is giving meaning to her life through her work.

But this is something she brings to the work. It is going the "second mile." The work didn't do this for her. She did it for the work. And every job allows for this as long as we try to see it in the proper light, when we think of giving instead of getting.

Unfortunately many people who fail to find meaning in life seek only money. Ask the average individual what he is getting out of his work, and he will probably answer you in terms of dollars and cents, including fringe benefits—pensions, hospitalization, even burial expenses.

Jesus, who developed His awareness of life at the workbench, said, "Seek first his kingdom...and all these things shall be added." Seek first to respond to the opportunity of your work by putting yourself into it. Do this and you will gain fulfilment and compensation too.

Friedrich Froebel, the great German educator, said, "The delusive idea that men merely toil and work for the sake of preserving their bodies and procuring for themselves bread, houses,

and clothes is degrading and not to be encouraged. The true origin of man's activity and creativeness lies in his increasing impulse to embody outside himself, the divine and spiritual element within him."

Life is actually a process of living from within out. Thus the fulfillment of life can come only through giving and not through receiving. No matter how much money or fame a person may receive from his work, there is always a continuing restlessness or urge that will not let him stop short of giving more. Little does he know it, but the person who fails to do his best with the thought, "I do all I need to do for the price they pay me," is shortchanging himself.

Jesus said, "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." I like to think that this means, "Don't get trapped in the mistake of equating what you earn with the work you do." Certainly as a spiritual being you should demonstrate prosperity, but work for the consciousness of supply that comes from the Infinite. Do not let yourself fall into the trap of thinking that the work is the only channel through which you can make a living. Give thanks that God is the instant, constant, and abundant supply for all your needs; then rejoice in your work and consider it an opportunity to "make a life."

Take another look at your work—not in the light of what it does *for* you but in what it does *to* you. Your work offers you your best opportunity to grow. Are you making the most of it? Work provides us with unlimited opportunities to smooth off the rough edges in our nature. For instance, work puts us in contact with innumerable persons; and of course wherever there is an association of human beings, there is likely to be competition, jealousy, hurt feelings, and the like. All the weak spots come to the surface where they can be observed and handled. Incidentally, the person who solves these problems in his life is very much in demand in the marketplace.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said:— "No matter what your work, let it be yours. No matter if you are a tinker, or a preacher, or a president, let what you are doing be organic, let it be in your bones, and you open the door by

which the affluence of heaven and earth shall stream into you."

I like that word *organic*. Let your work be a vital part of your whole experience of life and not just something you have to do to earn the premium for living. Watch your attitudes regarding your work.

So often people speak of going "back to work" after a holiday or a weekend. This indicates that for them work is a retreat from life, a backward step that they keep taking all through their work years and from which they will be saved at retirement.

Don't you believe it! In retirement people learn all too quickly that work is the most important single activity in life. Never go *back* to work. Elimate the phrase from your vocabulary. Go *forward* to work or *onward* to work or *upward* to work.

When our work is organic, it becomes as refreshing as rest, as interesting as play, and as meaningful as prayer. When we get this idea into our consciousness, we take all the "irk" out of work.

I remember a young woman working in a chocolate factory, who long had been troubled because of a supervisor with whom she found it difficult to get along. This simple concept set her free.

She says, "It is different now, for now I make chocolates for God."

She finally got herself out of the way and allowed her work to become a part of the process of living, as natural as breathing.

Give yourself a raise by raising your thoughts about your work. Let the creative process flow through you, fulfilling you in everything that you do. Forget that you receive a salary and think only of the joy of giving and serving. You will realize blessings in your work that you have never dreamed possible—and increased compensation too!

NOTICES and COMMENTS

NEW ADVISOR. Miss Dorothy Barko has accepted FIP's invitation to be an Eastern Zone advisor. She is a lawyer, with her own firm, and is a member of American Woman's Association (of which she is presently president), many clubs. She has been active in FIP since 1962.

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